

To the Electors of Shrewsbury.

Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes.

SHAKESPERE.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN virtuous characters are wantonly and maliciously attacked, it behoves the "Friends of Truth," who are such, not in name only, but in sincerity, to repress such malignant assaults, and to stand up in vindication of injured worth. If you have perused some fugitive pieces, which have lately made their appearance, you cannot be ignorant, Gentlemen, that Sir R. Hill, has not only had accusations lodged against him, which from his inmost soul he abhors; but one of his accusers has dared to usurp the prerogative of the Great Supreme, and to affirm that "Sir R. Hill's religion is really not the true religion." Should the person who has asserted this, be the author of "Measure for Measure," he is earnestly requested for his own sake, not to suffer that passage of Holy Writ, to stand in the title page of his pamphlet, which has appeared in the advertisement of it, as it will recoil with redoubled force upon himself. "Judge not that ye be not judged." And let him be careful, first of all to consider "the Beam that is in his own eye," before he attempts to "pull out the Mote that is in his brother's eye."

The writer of the elaborate pamphlet, intitled "A Vindication of the Character of Sir R. Hill, &c." has had a torrent of unmerited abuse poured upon him for his well-timed interference; tho' some think the character vindicated so well established, as to stand in need of no defence. Admitting however, for the sake of argument, the justness of the charge of over-officiousness: yet, Gentlemen, your good sense I am persuaded, will enable you to discriminate, between the *open* VINDICATOR, and the *masked* DETRACTORS of a Gentleman, whose life and actions, are a keen and poignant satire on those who spare no pains to blacken and defame him. Let such, especially, who dare to prostitute the Sacred Pages, and make them the Vehicle of their envy and Malignity, be told, that when the name of the wicked shall rot, "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

If every foible, which may attach to the *best* of characters, be allowed to be exposed to public view, in order to excite ridicule and contempt, by those, who, if we may judge by the effusions of their pens, are actuated by the most inveterate rancour and malice, in what an odious light would the shades of those who are *not* the best of characters appear, were a luminous ray ever to reflect upon them! But recrimination apart—"He who willingly extends his credulity to the belief of calumnies," as a prelate of our excellent church observes, "is a wicked man or a fool."—To you Gentlemen, I again appeal, and as some empiricks say, "Taste, try, compare, and judge." Avail yourselves of this maxim: And let that Candidate have your suffrages, who is the most determined friend of Religion and Virtue; of our most excellent Constitution; the avowed enemy of all *Aristocratic Influence*; and the warmest advocate for the Abolition of the *Slave-Trade*, the restoration of *Peace*, and the total demolition of *rotten Boroughs*.

P. G. M.